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NINTH PLENUM SPEECH OF TADEUSZ JANCZYK
ON POLAND'S RURAL RETAIL TRADE NETWORK

Nowe Drogi
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The following report of Tadeusz Janczyk, President of the Central Cooperative Council of the Union of Peasant Self-Help, was given at the Ninth Plenum of the KC PZPR (Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party), held in Warsaw on 29-30 October 1953.

The report was given at the plenum as an amplification of the featured report of Premier Boleslaw Bierut, "Task of Party in Struggle to Raise Standard of Living of the Workers in Current Phase of Building Socialism." An English-language translation of Bierut's report is available in the PAP (Polish Press Agency) release of 6 November 1953, pages 1-44.7

To increase the material interest of the worker-peasants in a continued improvement of agricultural production and to enable them to develop their farms, we must increase the supply of the means of production and consumer goods to the villages and improve the efficiency of the rural trade network.

In Poland, rural trade is handled almost entirely by the GS (Gminne Spoldzielnie, Gmina Cooperatives). Goods produced by socialist industry to supply the village are routed to the GS retail system through a network of state branch offices and powiat warehouses.

The rural cooperatives achieved a marked improvement in the organization of rural supply in 1952 and 1953. The value of goods distributed by the GS in 1953 was 12.7 percent higher than in 1952. Following the 1 December 1952 Resolution of the Presidium of the Government on the improvement of rural supply through the rural cooperative apparatus, the assortment of goods supplied to the village in the last 2 years was better and more suited to the needs of the peasants.

The supply plan for the fourth quarter of 1953 provides for a marked quantitative increase over the previous quarter, with special emphasis on building materials. In this period, the demand for cement and bricks will be fully satisfied, and deliveries of lumber, roofing, iron castings, and bar iron will be increased. It is self-evident that as the volume of goods produced by industry increased from year to year, the rural distribution network also had to be expanded.

As of 1 January 1952, there were 29,255 GS sales points; as of 1 January 1953, 34,351; as of 1 October 1953, 30,234. In this period, about 6,000 villages which had no supply points up to 1952 activated their own cooperative stores. The number of branch stores handling shoes, accessories, and household articles increased from 3,287 on 1 January 1952 to 5,065 on 1 October 1953. The number of general cooperative stores in the powiat cities carrying special assortments of articles for the village rose from 149 on 1 January 1952 to 327 on 1 October 1953.

The number of stalls at fairs and markets increased in 1953 and now exceeds 5,000. In 1953, 692 fairs were organized in powiat cities, and 700 towns were being permanently serviced by hucksters' stands.

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We must admit, however, that rural trade has not yet reached the level enabling it properly to satisfy the demands of the worker-peasants. The buying power of the rural population has increased steadily and its demands have also increased, not only quantitatively, but also in assortment, color, size, etc. The majority of gmina cooperatives and the PZGSs (Powiatowy Zarząd Gminnych Spółdzielni, Powiat Administration of Gmina Cooperatives) make the serious mistake of not considering the requirements of the population in distributing goods to the gmina and village retail network. The PZGSs and GS have not been interested in a systematic flow of goods to the retail network, thus disrupting the supply to the village. PZGS warehouses are stocked with goods not seen in gmina cooperatives. In many instances the warehouses have been stocked with articles which were short in neighboring stores. The purchaser is interested in the goods available to him at the store, and not in the large stocks in the warehouse.

Through negligence, certain PZGSs have grossly mismanaged the great volume of goods received from industry. It was learned recently that the powiat warehouse in Sieradz, Lodz Wojewodztwo, had a large number of plowshares in the warehouse since April. The number was much greater than the demand warranted. There was also damaged furniture and a large supply of bicycle parts going to waste. Although the PZGS warehouses have a large stock of assorted clothing (valued at 5.5 million zlotys), the GS stores in Sieradz Powiat have a very inadequate stock of clothing.

The wojewodztwo branch offices have made no effort to get an allocation of the proper assortment of goods, and their attitude toward the retailer is "take what we give you," thus increasing the difficulties of the powiat GS stores.

The GS, the PZGS, and the central agricultural office must make a greater effort to improve the efficiency of those cooperatives which have been giving poor service to the rural population, those which have been making allocations mechanically, and those which have been keeping the goods in warehouses and neglecting to supply the retail network. To improve this state of affairs we must increase political indoctrination, raise the political qualifications of cooperative workers, and increase supervision. All autonomous cooperative offices and all GS members must assist in this work.

All worker peasants who are members of the cooperatives must participate in the management of the GS and supervise its operations if the GS is to fulfill the economic and social tasks properly.

The Opatow GS, Ostrowiecki Powiat, has followed statute procedure in calling regular meetings in the village. They have had an attendance of about 50 percent. Lively discussions on purchasing, production, and the struggle against defects and waste are the order of the day. In 1953, the council committees held 18 meetings, and made a number of investigations of coal, bran, cement, and fertilizer sales; crop and livestock contracts; and grain warehouses. Because of the energetic work of the autonomous offices and the cooperation of the gmina cooperative council with the management, the Opatow GS has fulfilled its sales plan, has operated at a profit, and has properly supplied the village stores. In the first half of 1953, it showed a profit of 587,000 zlotys. In the Wasniew GS, Ostrowiecki Powiat, where there has been no supervision and no mass participation in management by members; there has also been much confusion, waste, and inefficiency. In the first half of the year, the Wasniew GS showed a loss of about 150,000 zlotys.

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We stress the fact that gmina and powiat party committees have been very lax in enforcing the GS statutes. Nonenforcement of statutes results in political damage because it undermines the confidence of the peasants in the statute, and inactivates the autonomous offices of the gmina cooperatives.

It is a known fact that even when the PZGS wishes to place socially and professionally qualified persons in administrative positions, instead of acquainting the peasants with their candidates in advance, they try to force the candidates on the cooperative in a perfunctory manner, which scoffs at the GS statute provisions.

There is a rapid improvement in the political, organizational, and economic level of the cooperative, when the party committees take an interest in the work of the PZGS and GS, check their stock of supplies, check the work of the purchasing apparatus, and take an interest in the activities of the management of the cooperatives.

All party committees must aid the activities of the GS and PZGS. It is the responsibility of the activists of the cooperative movement to make a radical change in the style and method of work used thus far, and to make a greater effort to follow party directions.

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